



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

the character and effects of speculation, and who is possessed of a fine moral nature, will ever participate in the purely speculative operations of either the stock or the produce exchanges of our largest cities.

The question, "Is speculation wrong?" cannot, therefore, be answered categorically. The phenomena with which it deals are too complex. But with the help of the distinctions above drawn an answer may be obtained that is fairly definite. To resume, then: speculation as an institution is *economically* of doubtful utility; *socially*, it is productive of great and widespread evils; and *morally*, it is vitiated by a very considerable amount of dishonest "deals" and practices. As an individual action, speculation, at its best, is morally questionable.

JOHN A. RYAN.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA.

THE PLACE OF ETHICS IN THE TABLE OF THE SCIENCES.

A Swiss professor recently compared the philosopher to an Alpine traveler who with infinite pains had at length succeeded in reaching the summit of some very high mountain. On looking around him he found he could no longer distinctly see some of the smaller objects which had formerly occupied the largest share of his attention. The cottage in the valley which he had left, the wife from whom he had parted on the previous day had faded into a thin mist; but instead of them he was able to discern the larger contours of hill and valley and lake in a manner which he had never previously been able to do. The illustration is a very appropriate one to bring before our minds the work of the investigator who is interested in the larger relations of his special department to the general theory of knowledge. In these days we must either be content to keep to the valleys and remain imprisoned in the roomy cell of our own special subject or else we must be prepared now and then to risk an expedition to the mountain tops so that we may become more familiar with the relations of our special subject

to the great world as a whole. In the latter case we must expect to find that some of the investigations which formerly delighted us are not so important as we deemed them; but although we may lose something in this way we gain a great deal more in width and comprehensiveness of view.

Every seeker after truth, in fact, ought to know something of the place of his science in the general scheme of the sciences, and, if this be granted, it can surely not be without interest for the student of ethics to consider the Table of Sciences which a Belgian professor gives in a recent interesting book—one of the latest attempts to continue the work of Comte and Spencer. Here is the order—beginning with the simpler and more general and ending with the more complex—in which he places the sciences:

1. Mathématiques.
2. Astronomie rationnelle ou abstraite.
3. Physique.
4. Chemie.
5. Physiologie.
6. Psychologie et Logique.
8. Génétique.
9. Esthétique.
10. Croyances (a) religieuses, (b) métaphysiques, (c) positives.
11. Ethique.
12. Droit. A. (a) procedure, droit pénal, (b) droit civil économique, (c) droit personnel et familial, (d) droit artistique, moral et philosophique, (e) droit administratif—interne et international.
B. Droit public, (a) interne, (b) international.
13. Politique, (a) représentation, (b) délibération, (c) exécution—internes et internationales.*

One or two thoughts will at once suggest themselves to the reader as he casts his eye over this formidable list of sciences. In the first place it generally follows Comte as against Spencer. In the second place Logic is looked on as mainly Induct-

*De Greef, "Les lois Sociologiques," p. 82.

ive, and is bracketed along with Psychology. In the third place more than half of the table is taken up with the particular sciences included under the general science of Sociology.

All the above considerations suggest possible lines of comment on the table of M. de Greef, but what will interest students of Ethics most of all is the lowly place assigned to their own particular science. It is not without emotion that one sees the master sciences of ethics lost amid a crowd of sociological sciences which jostle it on every side. Even Herbert Spencer does better for it than this. Though he does not enlarge much on it in his Table of the Sciences, he tells us in his "Data of Ethics," that this was the particular part of his philosophy to which he looked forward all the time. Ethics is at the very least, we had fondly hoped, the science which gives a finishing touch to all the sciences. Its end is the end to which all the cosmic laws have unceasingly pointed and whether, with Huxley, we oppose the "cosmic order" to the "ethical order" or whether we look on the "ethical order" as interpreting the "cosmic order," we find the same tendency of thought to exalt the functions and claims of ethics.

But the Belgian Table of Sciences which has been inserted above opposes itself at once to this tendency of thought. Instead of placing ethics at the end of the whole Table, it places it, as we have seen, in the middle of the sociological sciences. It comes to guide us when metaphysical and religious beliefs have shown their insufficiency; but superior to it and more comprehensive in their view of the world are the "Science of Right" and politics, national and international, as interpreted from a scientific point of view. Every inferior science is taken up by the superior science, and so there is an ethical element in politics; but apart from this, the sociologist views his ideal state as a society composed of *Ueber Menchen*—men who have transcended all merely ethical rules and postulates.

The whole subject suggests a close inquiry into the object and sphere of ethics and its relation to sociology in particular. What is involved in a "Science of Ethics" in the broadest and most general use of the term, and what is the place of such a science in the general Table of the Sciences?

The very name "Ethics" suggests at the outset a customary tendency of the human mind. Not only do we look on objects or actions as they are in themselves, but we make a certain estimate of them *i. e.*, we judge them with reference to some purpose or other. Often this purpose or end is not explicitly set before our mind and then we are more or less unable reasonably to justify our judgments. But with a perversity which points to some independent source of knowledge, we often cling to these judgments despite all the doubt which reason can suggest. Thus Socrates, at the dawn of ethical speculation, found that the men around him used certain terms which seemed to indicate principles of ethical judgment, and the whole aim of his "spiritual midwifery" was to bring to the birth those principles which were tacitly assumed.

In this wide sense of the word "Ethics," then, anything which is held to subserve a purpose and which is looked on with reference to this purpose, is the object of an ethical judgment. A carpenter's tool, if it is well made, and enables him to make the shavings fly with ease, can thus be said to yield a certain ethical satisfaction. An important question, however, is, can we apply this standard of purpose to all the judgments of an ordinary life or are there some that we need not include in the sphere of any possible ethics? An effort, for instance, has been made by Mr. Spencer* to show that a large part of conduct is ethically indifferent. "Shall I walk to the waterfall to-day? or shall I ramble along the seashore?" Here the *ends* are ethically indifferent." But this way of putting the matter is rather misleading. In the first place, if I make either the walk to the waterfall or the walk along the seashore, the object of an ethical judgment, I do not thereby look on either of them as an end in itself, but as comprehended for the time in some larger end. However often, therefore, I may be contented in ordinary life to let things take their course, there is no doubt that with reference to the larger scheme of my life, one of these choices at the particular time and in my particular mental state, would be more ethically fitting than the other.

*Spencer, "Data of Ethics," p. 6.

The waterfall might be another “cataract at Lodore,” which would suggest thoughts “too deep for tears,” or the sea might be fitted to interpret to me many pages of “Leaves of Grass,” which hitherto have remained sealed to me. In this sense, with reference to the larger purpose of my life, it cannot be said that such a choice could be ethically indifferent. But, in the second place, even Mr. Spencer admits that certain additional circumstances may make, even in the above case, an ethical judgment imperative. “If a friend who is with me has explored the seashore but has not seen the waterfall, the choice of one or the other end (?) is no longer ethically indifferent.” This goes far to admit the essential part of our contention. All life is the possible content of a series of ethical judgments. We are not entitled, so far as our argument has gone, to isolate a part of it and say that this part is beyond the pale of ethics. Of course, we may not, on any special occasion, explicitly set forth our ethical opinions, and certain people may be content to go through the world without any conscious ethics at all, but “in a calm hour” we must acknowledge that there were principles assumed all the time and that we live in the all-pervading atmosphere of ethics.

So far we have dealt with the judgments of our ordinary life, but the experience which we have gained here will help us when we come to deal with the more systematic and ordered judgments of science. What place does our subject occupy in the scale of the sciences? Can we, in the light of our previous analysis, hide it among the sciences dealing with sociology? Is ethics, in short, limited to the sociological sphere at all, or may we not equally look at all other sciences from an ethical standpoint?*

Now it is not to be denied that the prevailing view is the counterpart of that of Mr. Spencer on the ordinary judgments of life and makes ethics a science among the sciences—limited to judgments of a certain kind and a certain degree of complexity. Mr. Fiske, for example, whose recent books are so

*On this point, see Mackenzie, “Introduction to Social Philosophy,” p. 22.

interesting in their drift from the old moorings, is a good representative of this order of thought. He refuses to look on ethics as a mere by-product of the cosmic order; he traverses the views of Huxley in which the latter seems to look on it as a reversal of the "cosmic order," but at the same time he holds that only at the human stage—the stage when the *Homo Alalus* has ceased simply to "peep and mutter"—do ethical judgments at all become possible.* Man has a prolonged infancy in contrast with the other animals, and during this period of helplessness the experiences arise which are the root of all subsequent honor and self-sacrifice. Ethical judgments, then, inevitably arise as a result of cosmic progress, but it is only possible to make them at a certain stage of cosmic progress.

Our previous arguments, however, have made us exceedingly chary of accepting any limitation of the sphere of ethics. Of course, if we insist on reading into an ethical judgment, the conscious subordination of means to an end, then it is only possible to make such a judgment at a very late stage of the process of evolution. Without straying into any metaphysical discussion, it must be affirmed that, at any rate, nature is *unconscious* reason, and if we apply the adjective "ethical" to the judgments of the earlier sciences, we must postulate, besides the special science, a conscious intelligence which is able to discuss and declare its latent purpose. But there does not seem to be any particular reason why this postulate should not be granted and a consequent widening of the sphere of ethics effected. If we are going to limit ethics to conscious adjustments of means to end, we must begin a great deal further forward than even Mr. Fiske. It is impossible for man at the earlier stages even, of his distinctively sociological progress, to have a very clear idea of the goal set before him. Indeed it is very doubtful if many men have such a clear idea even now. It is advisable, then, to set aside for the time any idea of limiting ethics to the sphere of sociology and to see how far ethical judgments, in the wider sense of the word, can be said to be made in the earlier sciences.

*Fiske, "Through Nature to God," p. 101.

Possibly there is no science in which any teleological conception can be said to apply with less force than in mathematics. Its main conceptions of space and time furnish us with those ideas of the Infinite and the Absolute with which very many philosophers have so ably contrived to puzzle our minds. A thought that goes off flying into the infinite ether of pure space is a thought which you cannot very well put in a cage and confine within the four walls of a definite purpose. But even in mathematics there is a trace of that interpretation of means in the light of an end which we have seen to be the essential characteristic of an ethical judgment. Many people, nowadays, have heard of space of constant and inconstant curvature or of Riemann's space of n dimensions. But it cannot seriously be maintained that n -fold space is the space that is made use of in the mathematical part of statics and dynamics. So far as an experience is concerned, it may, indeed, be held that space of constant curvatures is a possible conception, but certainly in the space of an experience not n but only three coördinates at the most are needed to specify a point. If, then, we make the constructive results of statics and dynamics the end to which in the world as we find it, the earlier mathematical conceptions point, we must, at the same time, hold that space of n dimensions is a possible deviation from the straight path of rectitude in which experience guides us.* It is a line of development which, when judged in the light of the proximate end of the process, cannot be held to be successful. Perhaps in other circumstances and with other conditions, space of n dimensions will form an element in a world more wonderful than our own, but so far as our experience is concerned we must hold that, granted a conscious intelligence, it is possible to make a judgment which answers to our earlier definition of an ethical judgment.

That the materials for such an ethical judgment are latent

*If in this and the following paragraphs there is an extension of the meaning of "wrong-doing," which is thought fanciful, it must be remembered that even the theological words for sin suggest such an origin. The Pauline *παράπτωμα* means "a slip or fall sideways," "a false step," while *αμάρτημα* means "missing a mark."

in all development, is even more plainly seen in biological science. If we endeavor to make a systematic table of all plant and animal life, we shall find that we cannot arrange it in a linear series. Sometimes a certain series of forms can be traced up to a certain point and then the development is suddenly arrested. Sometimes, even, we have traces of actual degeneration in the history of a particular form. Nature often makes "false starts" and frequently she seems to go backward instead of forward. But what right have we to use the words "backward" or "forward" at all, or to speak of bacteria, for example, as degenerate forms of plant life? Simply that we have discovered a certain typical organism which stands at the end of the most successful line of development in the series, that by means of it, it has been possible for biology to pass into higher and more complex fields of science. Every reader of Prof. Huxley's "Lay Sermons" must remember the great use which he makes of the term "homologous organs." This meant that the barriers which separated organism from organism were being broken down and that it was becoming possible to express one in terms of another to which, outwardly, it presented no features of resemblance. If, then, the biologist came to a form which he regarded as the culminating form of the whole process, he was able subsequently to retrace his steps and to judge the rest of the development as a means to what he considers the proximate end. Here, then, again, we have the possibility of ethical judgments.

In Psychology this possibility is, of course, more evident still. The fact that in the Table of Sciences given above, Logic is bracketed with it, shows that here we have reached the epoch of reflection. The end is no longer one which is unconsciously reached to be afterwards used by a conscious intelligence as a principle of judgment. The end is now consciously sought after: it becomes an object of endeavor on the part of the means. Many ethical teachers would, of course, limit the word "ethics" to the conscious pursuit of ends by the means. If we do good unconsciously, they say, we have done nothing that can be rightly called moral at all. And it must be confessed that there is here a distinction which cannot be simply

ignored. The word "ethical" receives an immensely higher denotation in psychology. Its meaning is deepened and refined. We don't really begin to understand the "ethical" till we come to psychology, but though a cause is only truly made evident in its effect,* it does not follow, from this, that we need refuse to acknowledge the causes or make our word "ethical" too narrow to include them.

Of course, it is not necessary to say much about the ethical in psychology because it is in the psychological domain that most of the great ethical battles of the past have been fought. The Hedonistic controversy, for example, is obviously a question incident to the progress of a self-conscious but developing organism. The term "Pleasure" may be analyzed in two very different ways. It may be taken as a certain *intensive* aspect which may be detected in an object, varying from zero to infinity in a continuous scale. Or it may simply be taken in the sense of Spinoza as a progress from a lower to a higher perfection. In the first sense, we find ourselves involved in a great many psychological difficulties when we attempt to make a consistent Hedonistic calculus. In the second sense, it simply reduces itself to the coördinate of a certain stage in the development of a faculty. A constant oscillation between these two points of view may be seen in Mr. Spencer's "Data of Ethics." When he has shown conclusively that pleasures are relative, and that thus the first sense of the term is a very difficult one for ethical comparison, he suddenly changes his tack and drifts easily and almost imperceptibly to the second sense of the term. In this case the interpretation of the developed faculty by means of its coördinate expression, Pleasure, is very easy indeed, for they are simply convertible terms. But it is not my intention here to enter into a complete examination of Mr. Spencer's Hedonism. What I want to insist on is the fact that ethics is applied to psychology in the same way in which, with varying material, it is applied to sciences lower down in the scale. In the course of psychological development, we reach the idea of a life extended in length and breadth by complex re-representa-

**Cf.* Pringle—Pattison, "Man's Place in the Cosmos," p. 15.

tive ideas or of the coördinate expression for such a life and then, going back on our material we judge the means according as they do or do not tend to this end. That in Psychology the end is consciously sought after, is, of course, important, but it does not justify us in limiting the word "ethics" to the domain of psychology.

If Psychology has been the scene of most ethical controversies in the past, it seems no less clear that in Sociology many fierce ethical battles will be fought in the near future. No one who has tried to keep abreast of the books on this new science which have lately poured forth from France, Germany, America, Italy, and even Spain, can fail to see that the social end or the "Sociale Frage," is giving us a new standard of ethical judgment. Hedonism, for example, ceases to be a burining question when Sociology in this way alters the court of appeal. A certain degree of intensity may be the coördinate of a development of individual faculty, but it can hardly be the coördinate of a state of society. At the same time, however, ethical questions which Psychology had seemed to settle, rear their head in newer and more menacing forms. Egoistic Hedonism had become universalistic Hedonism and thus the head of Individualism in psychological Ethics had been scotched. But Egoism in Sociology is not so easy to dispose of. If with Kidd, we make the "Struggle for the Tropics" the most important movement in Western civilization at the present time, then we must recognize that there is a struggle going on between Individualism and Universalism in social life. A nation may use the Tropics as territory to be exploited for its own ends, or it may feel that even black nations have their rights. The great influence of Nietzsche is exerted mainly on behalf of Individualism in social conduct. People who would scorn the idea of Egoism in its narrower sense are yet ready to make "might" the ideal of the nation and the "will for might" as the best means to attain this desirable result.* At the opposite pole of thought, of course, stands the system of Tolstoy, with

*In a recent book it is roundly stated that this "will for might" is the dominating influence in English politics at the present time. See Steffen, "England als Weltmacht und Kulturstaat," p. 64.

its incessant depreciation of Patriotism as simply belonging to a past stage of the world's progress.*

What Ethics has to do in its relation to the social problem is to construct an ideal with reference to history and the laws of scientific Sociology. History is the laboratory of the social investigator. There he sees ideas tested and tried on a large scale, weighed sometimes and found wanting by the impartial judgment of the world's progress. It is difficult, sometimes, to get at the "naked truth" among the confusion of contending shibboleths. The danger is that we should hastily rush to conclusions and assume that some historical development is perfectly relevant to the case. History has to deal with such complex conditions. The thing that has been never occurs in exactly the same way again. In both Tolstoy and Nietzsche there is a certain impatience of history. They often substitute broad generalizations for well-founded laws and self-assertive dogmatism for patient reasoning.† All such methods must be discarded in the social ethics of the future. Our ideal must not be the dream of romance but one which we have slowly evolved from the developing life around us. From this point of view the sociologist is a kind of oracle, revealing to each age the age's highest needs. Already we seem able, to some extent, to forecast the social ideal of the twentieth century. The great Western nations are settling down into one or two well-defined groups. Of course there are wars still, but this preservation of the "balance of power" among one or two nations, is undoubtedly an influence in the direction of peace.‡ Once, however, the political ideal has begun to be realized, there will remain the social ideal still to be attained. How are we to reconcile the interests of groups of men and classes within the federated states? How are we to put the citizens on a level in the "struggle for existence"? We may certainly take it for granted

*Tolstoy, "Patriotism and Government," p. 12.

†Take, for example, the dogmatic way in which Tolstoy selects and harmonizes an evangel for himself from the Christian Gospels, and Nietzsche's massing of Platoism, Judaism and Christianity together as teaching the same lesson in history.

‡Cf. Stein, "Das Ideal des ewigen Friedens und die Sociale Frage," pp. 44-65.

at the outset that, so long as a complex society exists, so long there will be struggle, whether that struggle has been moralized or not. A stagnant state, such as Mr. Spencer dreams of, where everybody will be so delightfully adjusted to his environment that the whole may be wrought by machinerv. if need be, is an ideal which one does not like to contemplate at close quarters. The human will is always restless; it cannot be satisfied with what it has already done. As soon as it has at any time adjusted itself, it will launch out again into more extensive combinations. But if our social ethics is comprehensive, it should show us how to regulate the "struggle for existence." Rivalry, in that case, may become not a jealous scramble for material goods which all the combatants want and which, obviously, all cannot have, but a good-humored spirit of emulation in a state where all can help and where the good of one is the good of the community. In a poem lately published, Mr. William Watson has expressed his doubts as to the possibility of such an ordered progress:

"Rather some random throw
Of heedless nature's dice
'Twould seem, that from so low
Hath lifted man so high."

But we are rapidly outgrowing these artistic fears. It is the task of social ethics to point out to us our ideal and to carry it back to our help in the field of history.

As a result then and as an extension of the foregoing argument, it is now possible to ask the reader's assent to three important conclusions:—

In the first place, we cannot hide Ethics among the social sciences, like some modern babe in the woods buried among the leaves of the forest. Every cause can only be made fully evident in the light of its effect and every aspect of life and science has its ethical side. If we draw up a "Table of the Sciences," we must draw a vertical line by the side of such division and along the course of this line, we must write the word "Ethics."

In the second place, it is a misjudgment of the facts to contrast the "cosmic process" with the ethical or sociological process and to brand the former as unethical. The "cosmic pro-

cess" is ethical after its kind, but its end is not the same as the sociological. The sociological process aims at producing the man whose interests are so perfectly identical with society that you can express his life in terms of the ideal state. The biological or cosmic process simply aims at producing the most successful type of the vital organism. Means that are relevant in view of the latter end are brutal in the light of the former. But we must not make a sudden leap from one order of being to another.

In the third place, we must not therefore assume, as some later sociologists do, that the sociological end must be taken as the unifying principle of the whole universe. More comprehensive than the world of knowledge is the world of values—the world of art, religion, and the great idealistic systems of philosophy. If M. de Greef goes to the history of art and religion only the ninth and tenth places in his hierarchy, we must remember at the same time that a work of art is not the same as the history of its production or contents nor a system of metaphysics an accident of the *milieu* in which it has been brought to birth. The highest results that ethics reaches in the domain of sociology, the most complex of the sciences, are simply stages in the long progress to ultimate and perfected truth.

J. H. HARLEY.

LONDON.